

Christianity and Society

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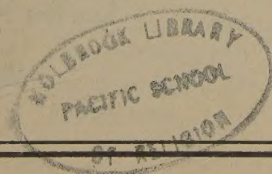
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EDITORIALS

Politicians and Bankers

Probably only a few people saw a brief story published in the inside pages of American newspapers recently to the effect that more than 500 bank defalcations were discovered in the United States last year. It is reasonable to suppose that the story of these shortages would have been treated very differently had they been found in the accounts of the fiscal officers of the federal government. *How does it happen that we are so much more interested in the morals of politicians than we are in the morals of bankers?* Newspaper publishers doubtless feel more sympathetic toward bankers than they do toward politicians because they identify themselves with the business community and share the attitudes of businessmen. It is possible, however, that people generally are much more interested in the morals of politicians than they are in the morals of other people for reasons that do not reflect merely the political preconceptions of any single social group.

If bankers falsify their accounts the law takes its course, the defalcator is punished but no great issue is raised thereby, because the responsibilities of bankers are narrowly defined and the rules of the game are well established and widely accepted. If we had a well established dictatorship in the United States we might treat malfeasance in public office as a routine matter also. Our interest in the morals of public men reflects the importance we attach to politicians in a

free, competitive, democratic system of politics. We are interested in politicians because they deal with matters that concern all of us, because all of us participate in political decisions, and because ultimately the substance of political decisions is the survival of our civilization. *The thing we have in common with more people than anything else is politics.*

Because politics is important, extremely competitive, and involves the whole community, we have developed a tradition of political discussion of a quality and vigor that goes far beyond the bounds of the accepted practice of business competition, for example. Business competitors usually are extremely restrained in their comments on their rivals, but political debate recognizes no such limitations. This is shown in the legal doctrine of "fair comment" about public persons, according to which it is permissible to say things about people in politics that could not be said about other people at all.

The personalities, character, motivation, family relations, and income of politicians are well within the scope of political discussion. While the latitude of this discussion is often abused we ought to understand the reason for the legal rule of fair comment—political power and public office involve questions of trust and confidence and social responsibility to a degree that surpasses the standards set for other vocations and professions.

Whoever goes into politics, therefore, subjects himself to a kind of scrutiny of his character, his good faith, and his motives more critical and searching than anything that would be tolerated anywhere else. The scrutiny is not only searching; it is *public*.

Now that is the way we want it and that is how it ought to be, but we ought to understand the implications of the distinction in the status of the politician and the banker. We know so much more about our politicians than we know about our bankers that we simply do not have a fair basis for a comparison of the morals of bankers and politicians.

E. E. SCHATTSCHNEIDER

A Word to the Despisers of Religion

In 1799, Friedrich Schleiermacher published a work whose provocative title was expressive of that theologian's understanding of his role as the apologist for the Church to the world and as the apologist for the world to the Church: "On Religion: Addresses to the Cultured among its Despisers."

As in Schleiermacher's day, so in our own there are many, not only among the "cultured" but among all sorts and conditions of men, who are despisers of religion. If we take as a criterion the amount and kind of attention which is given to religion in the influential institutions of our society—the movies, radio, and newspapers, government, business large and small, the labor unions, education, the arts—we must conclude that on the whole Twentieth Century America assigns to religion a peripheral and largely irrelevant place in its life.

There is a wholesome tendency in Protestantism to be undismayed by the judgment of the world. This tendency is wholesome because it embodies the recognition that the offence of the Cross precludes Christianity's ever achieving "popular" approval like that accorded to Ivory Soap or the rosy and wholesome world of the Reader's Digest. We do well to remember that the first Christians encountered not widespread acclaim and acceptance, but universal re-

viling, persecution, and slander. Woe indeed unto us when all men speak well of us.

But if there is anything worse than being spoken well of by all men, it is being spoken ill of for the wrong reason. We have suggested that our world finds religion not an offence but an irrelevance. Let us not comfort ourselves by confusing the two, for there is a world of difference between them. Indeed, so great is the difference that while the world judges religion to be irrelevant, at the same time it finds religion a very pleasant thing to have around, and treats it as a comforting, a stabilizing, even an edifying addendum to life. Seeing the absurdity of the churches' ready acceptance of this kind of secure, easy, and respectable role, many of the more thoughtful, more honest, and more sensitive of the men and women of our time have by word and deed refused to allow it even this place.

In recent years, however, we have seen indications that religion may be returning to a position of centrality in our national life at many levels. These signs are surely not the sweeping success of the Billy Graham revivals, or the new popularity of vulgar movies with religious themes, or even the side-tracking of the Vatican appointment because of the storm it aroused in Protestant circles. The signs are rather on the one hand the new receptiveness which men of intelligence and integrity have to the fundamental perspectives of the Christian faith rather more in spite of than because of the chaff we have been preaching; and on the other hand the emergence within the churches of men of the same qualities who have been willing to involve themselves deeply in the life of our world. No other cause can be assigned for these trends except the cataclysmic events of the past few years through which God has reminded men both within and without the churches of the seriousness of their responsibility for the intellectual, political, social, cultural, and personal life of the human community.

It is unfortunate that so far this kind of responsibility has been assumed only by a few devoted individuals, and that for the most part the churches have continued to

go their parochial way and the world gleefully to accept them on that basis.

It is to nurture this responsibility among ourselves and through us in the churches that Christian Action has been formed. We are committed to the proclamation of the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is supremely relevant to every aspect of human life, individual and social. It is relevant to the life of each man as he thinks, as he works, as he votes, as he plays, as he influences others, as he creates or appreciates works of art. It is relevant to the life of human society as it governs itself, as it economizes, as it educates its members, as it develops and preserves a cultural tradition.

We are committed, furthermore, not simply to saying over and over again that this is so, but to establishing its truth in our common life. It is for this reason, not simply because of a sentimental desire to have "all kinds of people" in our movement, that we have often expressed our concern for spreading the membership and activity of Christian Action beyond the personnel and range of the religious institutions. We need Christian laymen in Christian Action, because it is only the Christian layman who can bring the Christian witness to bear directly upon the "secular" world.

We can hardly claim that this is a new idea. It is at least in part simply an effort to re-vitalize and re-interpret the Reformation doctrine of vocation. It is another expression of the oft-repeated conviction in the churches that we need "more Christians" in politics, in economics, in labor, in business, in the arts. But it is an attempt to understand this conviction more deeply than have many of those who have expressed it. By a "Christian in politics" we do not mean simply a Congressman who goes to church, treats his family well, and makes speeches calling for a "moral re-awakening" in America; we mean a man who is wise in the ways of political life and both understands the religious significance of issues having to do with taxation, military preparedness, and international relations, and is willing to do the hard and often unpleasant work involved in getting bills

passed. By a "Christian business man" we do not mean simply one who prays with his employees and with his associates at lunch every other Monday; we mean one who understands his own and his colleagues' work in religious terms, both in relation to the whole of human society and to the lives of those who work. By a "Christian artist" we do not mean simply one who paints pictures for Sunday Schools or writes moralizing novels; we mean one whose depth of perception and profundity of expression shows forth God, man, and the world in their true misery and grandeur.

In short, we are prepared to insist that he who would be a Christian in any walk of life must first of all be a competent practitioner of his chosen calling. The Christian politician, worker, economist, or artist, is basically the astute politician, the skilled worker, the informed economist, the sensitive artist. Secondly, he who would be a Christian in his work must be willing to examine with us the central insights of the Christian faith and to work out their relation to his particular calling. In the measure that we all seek to make Christian judgments about politics, economics, or culture, we too must possess at least a minimum of knowledge about these fields, a kind of knowledge which can be acquired only by the concerted study of them on their own terms.

It is for people who are willing to do this kind of thing that we are looking in Christian Action. It is through the thought and action of such people as their lives touch the life of society that we may speak to a world which holds religion to be of little consequence; it is through them that we may win back the despisers of religion in our day, and thus fulfill the charge laid upon us to preach the Gospel to every nation.

JOHN W. TURNBULL

Civil Liberties

The abrogation of civil liberties in the United States continues. A book burning in Oklahoma can be distinguished from the book purge under Soviet auspices in Vienna only by the number of volumes cast into

the flames. The battle for free schools erupts in such diverse places as New York and Los Angeles, Phoenix and Bronxville, and afflicts secondary as well as college and university education. The issue of the conflict is the control of the public mind. There are those who believe that the best control of what people think is the free dissemination and discussion of ideas. There are those who believe that ideas and discussion must be controlled by legal or social pressure from without.

On this level, American democracy has shown itself healthy and flexible enough to keep a fairly even score between victories and defeats. Meanwhile an imperceptible and persistent effort of another sort is being made. This is the effort to set the legal stage for the almost instantaneous suspension of the free concourse of ideas should the state of the nation seem to require it. What is going on is perilous because it is almost impossible to keep a vigilant citizenry abreast of it. Last July, for instance, Mr. James V. Bennett, the Federal Director of Prisons, asked, at a hearing before the Senate Appropriations Committee, for a special appropriation "to take over and operate six stand-by camps in connection with the detention of persons who might be picked up as subversives in accordance with the provisions of the McCarran Act." Last January, the press reported the introduction into the Senate of a bill, sponsored by Senator Eastland of Mississippi, which would by concurrent resolution of Congress declare the existence of an internal security emergency, and "place into full effect" the detention provisions of the McCarran Act. Title II of this Act (Public Law 831 of the 81st Congress) provides that "whenever there shall be in existence such an emergency, the President, acting through the Attorney General, is hereby authorized to apprehend and by order detain . . . each person as to whom there is reasonable ground to believe that such person will engage in, or probably will conspire with others to engage in acts of espionage or sabotage". A little reflection on these provisions suggests that here is a blueprint for concentration camps American style. Demo-

cratic processes are being used to undermine the very foundations of the American constitutional structure. Happily, Congressman Adolph J. Sabbath of Illinois, has introduced a bill (H.R. 3118) which provides for the repeal of the McCarran Act.

The legislative battle is thus also still open. And there can be no doubt what civic action should be taken by all those who are genuinely committed to the health and survival of American democracy. What is not so clear is that this is a concrete Christian responsibility. Constitutional guarantees of civil liberties are a political instrument for checking the inordinate use of power by nations or by individuals and groups within nations. The inordinate use of power breeds self-righteousness and idolatry whenever the structures and the exercise of power are placed beyond effective criticism and control. The Christian gospel is the gospel of a God who acts in the world not only against all self-righteousness and idolatry, but also positively, by transforming the motives and the structures of human life in accordance with the community of the Son of His love. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to bring the full weight of the Christian conscience to bear against all who imagine that they can preserve and strengthen democracy in America by weakening the structural guarantees of the liberties of the people.

PAUL LEHMANN

Out of the West

A certain amount of work has been done over these last months in making Christian Action operative on the West Coast. It felt at first a little like pushing a ten-ton truck out of very deep adobe mud, for we had no such impetus as the Washington conference gave the movement in the East; and of course we were pushing with one hand, the other being busy, with manifold chores. It's early days yet, but we begin to see some movement. We have the minimum but essential structure of an organization, and as much work planned as we can handle. What follows is by no means an

official transcript of opinion out here, but simply a personal reflection based on our experience so far.

When we broke the shell of the Frontier Fellowship to make the omelette which is Christian Action, we incorporated a number of ingredients which should blend to make a most succulent and most nourishing dish. But they have to be kept in proportion. Theology we need, activity we need: theory and practice here as elsewhere belong together. I begin however to feel the pull of a kind of activity which to my mind would be misdirected. So many folk feel that they have been long frustrated by the absence of such an interdenominational group that now the chance appears for some really dynamic action on immediate and urgent issues. So far so good: but we need to watch the temptation to take on a programme of self-justifying activity, the kind of activity which does no more—or not much more—than show that our heart's in the right place.

At this point our theologians can help us, if they will bring us so under the doctrine of justification by grace that we will renounce such attempts at self-justification. For the best politics are still secular politics, and the most relevant sphere of work on, say, civil right and discrimination, is in the community organizations concerned with these issues. This does not mean that there are not points at which we can spear-head an attack within the Church itself. Witness the recent poll of churches in Indianapolis on the question of admission of non-Caucasian Christians.

But the Church's integrity is always more important than its public influence, and the two are quite often in inverse proportion. It is here that our main work lies, and heaven knows there is enough of it to be done. Four points of impact immediately occur:

- i. By some decent theologico-historical work we may do something to save our Reformation forebears from being misrepresented, as they are now misrepresented, as the pioneers of Christian and of economic individualism. Shades of Calvin, Hooker and Cotton!
- ii. We might amplify the work which Bennett and Niebuhr recently have done on the sociology of the National Council of Churches.
- iii. We need responsible analyses of the impact of welfare-state systems upon Christian communities close-kin to ours, in Britain for example, and elsewhere.
- iv. We need to sketch in theory and practice the kind of relevant disciplines in worship and in economic behavior which give authentic Protestantism a shape again.

A pox on the view that we have had enough talk and need some action. Personally I get much too much action and far too little illuminating talk. There is a kind of talk—what Barth calls “binding speech”—which is a kind of action. And we can't have too much of it.

ALEXANDER MILLER

PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN ACTION

“Almighty God, may Thy justice and peace be established among all men and nations. So guide and direct our Action that Thy will may be done through us. Endow us with the will and courage fearlessly to seek Thy Kingdom, and fill our hearts with Thy love and grace that we draw others unto Thee and turn none away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”

PROBLEMS PROTESTANTISM FACES IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY

By KENNETH UNDERWOOD

The overriding social fact which now confronts the new Christian Action movement is this: the bi-polar world conflict between Soviet Communism and the West is so titanic and revolutionary that it magnifies and highlights weaknesses in institutions that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. The extraordinary responsibility of religious leaders in America like ourselves for what becomes of millions of people in the next few years grows out of the fact that only in the United States are to be found the democratic instruments and the resources and technology needed to deal with the forces that threaten to subjugate the world in a new totalitarianism and in ancient poverty and ignorance. This compound of democracy and power makes the moral and religious resources of the American people one of the decisive factors in the contemporary scene. A major responsibility for the moral sensitivity of the American people must be laid upon the Protestant churches as the dominant religious group in our culture.

This is why the following analysis of the overall problems facing Christian Action is centered in American society and American Protestantism. We are daily observing fundamental decisions being made in America about political strategy, military expenditures, world economic reform, and public opinion manipulation which affect the destiny of nations. These decisions greatly condition the use of American power for years to come. In this crucial period only those institutions with organizations able to act quickly and decisively through leaders possessing expert knowledge and clearly designated authority to act, with members exhibiting morale and discipline of belief and with communication outlets to the general public and to centers of

power have been able to exercise sustained influence on national policy.

These past fateful years have highlighted a developing but unrecognized crisis within the Protestant institution. The crisis will become increasingly portentous and disastrous in years ahead as *integrated and coordinated policy* becomes necessary for national and group survival, and periodic crises of Korean war proportions demand institutions able to achieve that combination of discipline and freedom necessary for effective action.

It is not so much the bigness of groupings such as unions, business, and government that characterizes our social problems. It is the necessity for coordinated, integrated policy of big units evidenced in the Korean crisis and in our world responsibilities in general—policy to maintain economic stability, to aid economic and social reform abroad, to contain Communism militarily, to adapt our political institutions so as to achieve purposeful and supported government action. The federal government with the aid of various private power blocs must now plan for social, political, economic and communication policies with worldwide implications. The unrecognized Protestant crisis is that the Protestant churches are not able to contribute importantly to the solution of America's most pressing social problems and are poorly prepared to influence the centers of public policy-making because of: (1) the nature of Protestant churches' polity and religious beliefs out of which it developed; (2) the nature of their most commonly accepted political and economic ethics; and (3) the nature of their communication to the public. I will seek to adumbrate the three aspects of the thesis advanced: polity, social ethics, communications.

I. *Polity of Protestantism.* Organization, internal power relations or polity is not something that happens to a church or any institution. The manner in which people distribute power and authority in their associations reflects their true convictions and their ideas of how best to serve them. One of the most important tasks facing the Christian Action organizations may be to awaken Protestantism to the necessity to master the principles of organization, to seek to transform the Protestant church into an effective institution for communication of the Gospel in the modern world. One of the basic facts which American Protestantism has not adequately faced is that the struggle for influence in contemporary society is won by organizations, for organization overcomes the immobility of great numbers. A movement which in its basic unit—the local church—conceives of itself only as an aggregate of individuals who simply meet for fellowship and worship once a week, and which conceives of its witness to the Gospel merely as independent action of individuals encourages a great futility so far as public impact is concerned. The greater the number of unorganized individuals the greater the ability and ease with which groups who are organized can achieve control in society.

Protestants have not faced problems of polity in part because they have had no moral will or sense of a religious imperative to engage in effective action on matters about which church pastors expressed concern. They have been quick to sense the necessity for organization to achieve ends held important in their business, profession or union. Doctrinal assumptions have important implications for the way a religion is institutionalized. A basic doctrine and interpretation of its institutional implications dominates most Protestant churches: the principal witness of Protestantism is held to be the autonomous and direct relationship of the individual to God and therefore institutional or organized expression of religion is a matter of no great moment. By contrast the doctrinal systems of most religious or absolutistic

movements in the modern world—such as Roman Catholicism and Communism—are institutionally centered. And the study of Catholicism and Communism reveals at least this common factor in these movements—the religious and political impact of visible institutions that have been deified and absolutized.

I would pose as one of the fundamental doctrinal problems for Protestantism: is there within Protestant doctrine the basis for the development of an institution that can survive and have influence in the modern world, and which is somewhere between the undisciplined fellowship and relative anarchy of present Protestantism and the identification of salvation with a particular institution typifying Catholicism and Communism? In short, how can we balance freedom and order in the achievement of an institution capable of fighting for justice and of effectively communicating the Gospel in modern society?

If Protestants are not able to develop a conception of the church in which they seek religious truth together and develop some adequate institutional expression of their religion, they may have great difficulty maintaining significant influence over American or world culture. Modern Protestantism and Catholicism are in many aspects both expressions of man's despair and loss of a profound relation to God. In Catholicism, this despair expresses itself in the deification of an institution and the fear of the individual, independent conscience before God; in Protestantism this despair expresses itself in the deification of the individual conscience, in the denial of communality, and of discipline necessary to achieve a witness in a collectivist society. Protestantism stands for justice, for liberty, for the sanctity of human personality. This is true, but no movement is going to be taken seriously if responsibility in it has not been carefully designated and if organization has not been achieved adequate for effective contention in the interest of the goals for which the movement stands.

American Protestantism still does not have adequate organization to achieve sig-

nificant influence upon big government or upon private power blocs or on the mass communications media. We have a few impressive top-level organizations, such as the National Council of Churches, but most denominational agencies for social education and action are represented by one or two men trying to provide leadership to laymen and to influence policy-making elites on a score of complex social issues. The ecumenical movement is tragically a top-level affair which does not reach into most local communities. The Protestant faith is a movement which has among its top-level scholars and thinkers and in its Amsterdam, Detroit and other ecumenical conferences, rediscovered and rekindled what is in many ways a profound theology and ethic, but Protestantism does not have the organization or means of communicating this to rank and file members or to the centers of power in modern society. No adequate vocational centered education has been developed in local churches. The divorce of religious knowledge or faith from power is one of the most tragic characteristics of modern society.

Protestantism is a movement with a disembodied gospel in the sense that local churches have almost no organization of laymen seeking to caucus on what they believe their faith requires them to do in a specific social situation, and to accept the discipline and delegation of authority necessary to act on their convictions.

Christian Action can contribute to Protestantism by the development of an organization within it which is authoritative, but not authoritarian. For Protestants, authority will not come from a claim to grace and truth given by God to a particular office, and transmitted to members. Our basic source of authority will be the conviction that God has laid hold of us with a gospel not our own, and also the awareness that our own conviction is in a sense our own—distorted by our own limitations and therefore needing the correction of others. Protestant authority is always characterized by a twin search for consensus among members as to God's will and for prophetic wit-

ness to the activity of God, a witness which challenges the consensus achieved.

I believe there is emerging within Protestantism a central core of integrated theological conviction and social analysis which can give new direction to the church. We want this conviction to emerge within the context of genuine interchange or communication of ideas between all levels of this organization. This consensus will be critical of much which the Protestant churches are doing in relating religion and culture. But we must seek to be a sect or caucus within the church, keeping the tension of sect disciplined conviction against easy accommodation to society, and having the church's desire to influence the centers of power in society and the church's awareness of God's activity in culture. We wish to master the internal power dynamics of "big religion" to get the jobs done that need to be done by the church. We wish to end Protestantism's escape from responsibility for influence in society and for effective communication by its refusal to develop the necessary organization. Members of Christian Action will need to learn how to designate responsibility for collecting information and for acting on it, to caucus at church conventions and conferences, to pool our resources, to develop complementary specialties within our local groups, to become dedicated groups of Christians seeking to understand the complexity of modern social problems and able to develop the consensus and discipline to act where we can have greatest influence.

Within the Protestant churches the centers of communication and influence are not mainly the social action departments on the top level, or the social action committees on the local level. We must attempt to redirect the tremendous and continual resources of religious education, foreign and home missions, and evangelism into a more adequate expression of our analysis of what God wills for Protestantism and its relation to culture.

Contemporary church experience points to the necessity of such an over-all analysis.

For instance, the home missions agencies have discovered that they cannot secure an adequate program for migrants outside of lobbying in Washington. In evangelism the Protestant churches need an approach which apprehends the individual in his *real* world, an evangelistic appeal which understands the impact which the mass communications media, the trade association, or the union makes upon him.

Such an integrated analysis would inform the whole church as to the hidden danger of the right-wing attack 'now' being made upon the social action agencies. For this attack is more than an isolated foray upon a few individuals. It is, in fact, an attack upon the work of the whole church. The Council of Social Action understands this danger. The church as a whole apparently does not—partly because the fragmentation of church programs and loyalties blinds other church agencies to the real implications of the right-wing attack.

II. *Political and Economic Ethic.* I have space only to indicate what seem to me the major problem areas of relating Protestant Ethics and political economy.

A. As indicated at the beginning of this article the major characteristic of America's responsibility in the world is the necessity for creating, adopting and executing *comprehensive and integrated policy* in advance of predictable emergencies, such as disastrous economic instability at home and abroad and new communist expansion into areas weakened by poverty and oppression. The chief coordination must come through the activity of the federal government and, therefore, the central difficulties of our society are focused in politics. The new Christian Action movement must help our churches to face this fact by giving chief attention to developing a Protestant ethic and a program of education in relation to politics. Millions of people suffer terribly in the world crisis from the fact that our country has not been able satisfactorily to mobilize and organize the majority to govern, to achieve the difficult business of politics which is to combine policy with power.

The Protestant churches can make their most important religious contribution to our society now, I believe, by making men aware of the continuous activity of God to bring people into full and real *community*. Men desperately need to discern the religious realities which will *integrate* society and which will give them a sense of the possibilities of the positive use of power and not simply of the necessity to restrain power.* Men need to have the demands of modern economics and of party politics reinterpreted in terms of the conditions of Christian community.

If the churches are concerned about integrated, coordinated action which will reflect the reality of community, they must seek to deal in social action with policy, not with the one shot, single issues which has characterized so much of Protestant social concern. For example, this organization is interested in the race problem, but we must deal with it in its largest context. The Negro is to be aided in his fight for justice by a movement which sees the achievement of economic stability as a crucial aid to minorities and which sees the close connection between the ability of a society to achieve economic stability and the degree of responsibility taken by the party to coordinate the legislative and executive branches of government. The Negro is aided in achieving freedom by a movement which helps him to use his new balance of power position in Northern politics and works for the type of party system in the South which will make the politician have to bid for the Negro vote. If Christian Action works for better race relations, let it do so aware of the full dynamics of the American political economy. And the same must be said for all other single issues we deal with—civil liberties, Point Four, etc.

B. We live in a society in which the liberal clichés of the thirties have been bankrupted. The easy talk of the "dangers of bigness" has been challenged by a new understanding of the control and use of

* The present series on "Christian Community" in *Social Action* magazine is seeking to aid the church in this task.

big organizations. The slogans of "full employment" are being replaced by a deeper knowledge of the nature of growth of national productivity and the mechanisms of economic stabilization. The total absorption of many Protestant social action departments with securing welfare legislation, as important a contribution as it has been and remains, has been shaken by the implications of basic research done by such groups as the Committee for Economic Development into the positive functions of the price system. The liberal's predispositions toward third party and independent political action have been brought under attack by the increased discernment of the fact that the major party offers the chief possibilities of combining policy and power needed in America. A painful reorientation of liberal economic and political thought is underway, and it is crucial that Christian Action give itself to this hard work. And that it press Protestant social action groups to this hard work, so that they do not succumb to the temptation to spend all their energies engaging in skirmishes with the "right wing" over old concepts.

C. Protestantism must develop some strategy for work with key centers of power and key social groups in our society. In Christian Action we will need to create an organization capable of helping the Protestant church achieve a new relevance to contemporary social structure. Varied interest and occupational groups—organized labor, business, agriculture—now absorb the chief energies of millions of men and mould the policies and ideologies of our society. Yet Protestantism has developed no significant program for the penetration of these groups, for interpreting the gospel in terms of the concrete decisions men in these groups face, for providing an ethic dealing with the balancing and integrating of these power groups in our society.

(1) We will want to aid the churches of suburbia to develop the type of religious education program that actually penetrates the *Reader's Digest* mentality of its membership, which engages members in religious

discussion about the specific ways in which business, professional and labor men exercise power in society.

(2) We are very late in seeing the responsibility of Protestant churches to meet the particular religious needs of lower income groups and to work with organized labor when common objectives appear. Labor will be an increasingly crucial political factor in the determination of government policy on basic domestic and international economic issues. We must strive to recruit, train, locate and sustain by fellowship men in terms of a general strategy of Protestantism and its work with such key social groups as labor.

(3) Perhaps the most crucial and neglected center of influence in American society for Christians is the major party organization. Many church educational programs and Christian Action local groups will need to specialize in preparing men to work within American major parties so they may be moulded into adequate instruments for the control of the federal government.

D. Our analysis of the nature of modern culture must be worked out in relation to the changes in the Protestant church which are necessary if it is to exercise influence upon the difficult decisions being made in the major centers of power. Protestant social action agencies and movements have not assumed this responsibility and have thus contributed themselves to their peripheral positions. Section I of this article has attempted to raise some of the implications of developments in modern culture for the transformation of the church.

Today many ministers and church leaders know that they cannot achieve a steady perspective upon contemporary political and economic affairs just from reading. They need the guidance of well-trained experts who combine sound theological convictions with some specialized training in the social sciences. Our social action agencies must provide this kind of expert leadership, and not just a two-man team which attempts heroically to cover many

diverse and complex policy issues. But our problem is more than merely assembling a commission of experts on some problem; the churches must also be willing to finance the expense of communicating these competent judgments both to the policy-making elite and to the public.

III. *Communication of Religious Ideas.*

One of the most crucial issues before American Protestantism is how to develop a program for communicating religious ideas and for relating the Christian faith to an era of mass communications. This is an era in which television in a Connecticut city takes up more children's time than does school, an era in which mass magazines such as *Reader's Digest* have larger circulation than all the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish magazines in America combined. It is an era in which one American corporation in 1949 spent more for public relations than the Federal government to carry on the battle of ideas abroad, and eight times the funds to be spent during the first year of the new National Council of Churches for religious education, public relations, radio and movie work.

The evangelistic, educational and missionary leaders of the church are just beginning to comprehend what it means to spread religious ideas in such a period. The church is, on the whole, depending upon the educational tools of a pre-mass communications age. It is doing so more than any other major social institution in America. This is in part a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in the recognition of the importance of the personal impact of the consecrated minister upon his people. It is a weakness in the failure to recognize how that impact is reduced by the secular nature of the mass media. The communication efforts of the church in this country reflect the institutional crisis already described in five ways:

1. The church press itself has become largely ingrown, reaching the people who are already church-goers. The content of the Protestant church press has been that of a house organ, narrowly institutional in its concern, tending to view wars, depres-

sions and revolutions in terms of their effects on "our missionaries" and "our church attendance." Communication analysis indicates that the implications of religious theory are understood by ordinary people only as they are placed in the existential context of events which most concern and affect them.

2. The churches have developed almost no study material on the relationship of Christian ethics to the mass communications media to help people evaluate and understand the popular press. The top-level denominational and ecumenical agencies have departments for securing space and time for promoting "religious" programs, but have not developed centers for analysis of the content of the mass media and for developing vocational conferences for the discussion of Christianity with the leadership in the mass media.

3. The Protestant church press gives little indication that it comprehends the variety of social groups and audiences in American culture. It has a mass audience concept of the regular church goer almost as narrow as the radio communicator has of his advertising target.

4. The failure of Protestantism to achieve ecumenicity commensurate with the demands of modern culture is nowhere more clearly evidenced than in its communication. We have united promotion on every member canvasses and on funds for foreign relief, but more importantly we have no national Protestant magazine with newsstand distribution and capable of competing technically with the best commercial journals. We have no means of allocating publishing responsibilities to the various denominational presses with an over-all communications strategy for reaching various audiences, so we continue with a church press having journalistic standards tragically and often ridiculously below those of the commercial press.

5. Many of the basic principles of communication are not recognized as acceptable by Protestant leaders, in part because of unexamined assumptions about the nature

of our religion and of our church institutions. Let us take but two examples: a) Successful challenging of old thought patterns often requires a situation in which an atmosphere of harmony and agreeableness has been deliberately disturbed by a leader or by the contention and pressure of other groups. The minister usually assumes that Christianity obligates one to strive to create harmony in the local church, and that he is a failure if his own acts or words create divisions in the church and force it into controversy. Our world is one of contention and strife as much as of harmony, and we had better encourage ministers to communicate in both situations.

b) Effective communication demands that we make explicit our position on concrete issues confronting men. This necessitates having within the Protestant church a polity which gives freedom to leaders, to communications staffs, as well as to rank and file laymen, to express their position on current issues, to indicate the manner in which the position is arrived at, and to make clear that this position is not necessarily to be identified with God's will or the church.

In order to aid the Protestant church communicate its gospel we shall need to direct our influence within Protestantism so that our churches will work, for example:

—to reach men already in the field of mass communications and to give them some sense of Christian vocation and the relation of Christian ethics to the process of modern communication.

—to send men with religious training and specialized training in the press into mass communications.

—to develop leaders for the minority presses and particularly for the church press for it is from this source that the stereotypes of the mass media can best be challenged and corrected.

—to give in seminaries some training in the application of communication principles to the local church, and in dissecting the formulas of the mass media and evaluating them from a Christian perspective.

This analysis has assumed that a church "outside" politics or economics is spiritually inconceivable. The church must take part in, wrestle with, seek to use its influence in all the crucial conflicts of our age. Such action will lead to victories and to defeat, to errors and misjudgments, but the retreat by leaders to vague general principles in order to avoid identification with particular causes is an illusion, fooling few laymen. It is a mock neutrality. In participating in the religious and moral issues involved in political affairs, new religious institutions are born and theology is developed, lay and clerical vitality is discovered and indifference exposed.

Our gospel is always revealing itself in new ways as something which cannot be contained within our existing institutions, and demanding transformations which are in turn judged by God. This is a summary of the overall position to which my own understanding of our faith and of the contemporary situation has led. I have stated it in my own terms and I realize with many of my presuppositions unstated. I seek your corrective counsel and insight, and pray that by God's grace I have said something that will aid us in acting as a movement so as to serve His purposes for all mankind.

BEWILDERED METHODISM: SOCIAL ACTION IN CONFUSION

By ROGER ORTMAYER

Although bewildering, there is something reassuring about Methodism's quadrennial spasm. As the memorials from individuals, churches and conferences pour in to the secretary at the General Conference, as the plans to streamline and make efficient Methodism's church organization, as the denunciations of the vocal and dogmatic Right are scrambled with administrators' desires to pour oil on the waters, Methodists know that while all may not be well, at least their Church is still recognizable and acting in predictable fashion.

As General Conference approaches, it is always a convenient time to focus upon cries of "subversive" activities, "socialist" conspiracies, "leftist" intrigue, and to demand a house cleaning of all those who would deviate from the "historic teachings of Methodism." This year of our Lord, 1952, finds the familiar clamor, claims and counterclaims, hopes and ambitions, dreams and strategies going on. The ingredients that give flavor to the current pudding are the resurgent Right wing, as represented by such groups as the newly-organized Methodist Circuit Riders and the Committee for the Preservation of Methodism. Concurrently there is the rather dismal denouement of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, the launching of the Fellowship of Methodist Pacifists, the Survey Report which proposes to reorganize Methodism along business efficiency lines, including an "integrated" agency for social service imposed upon a pervading and pervasive aura of indecision and fear in areas of social action.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action has been a most convenient and serviceable excuse for those who detest the very names and forms of democratic social service to blaze away at the whole at anything opposing their prejudices. The House

Un-American Activities Committee, in a 1948 pamphlet titled "One Hundred Things You Should Know About Communism and Religion" denounced the Federation as a "tool of the Communist Party," which was trying "to use the prestige of The Methodist Church to promote the line of the Communist Party." With a similar orientation, it has now (February 16, 1952) issued another 87-page pamphlet dealing solely with the Methodist Federation.

The approved line of attack is the familiar syllogism: "So and so", who writes in Methodist periodicals or has a position of leadership in The Methodist Church, is (or has been) a member of the Methodist Federation for Social Action; the Methodist Federation for Social Action is a communist tool; "so and so" is obviously furthering communist interest in The Methodist Church. This line of reasoning has been the bulwark of an enthusiastic and apparently well-financed attack carried on through such journals as Bob Shuler's *The Methodist Challenge* (Los Angeles), *One Methodist Voice* (Clayton, Georgia) and a plethora of mimeographed documents, which, it is charitable to say, are most carelessly edited. Within the past year, the mails of many Methodist leaders have literally been flooded with mailings carrying a Houston, Texas, postmark, distributing reprints from the *American Legion Magazine*; attacks on proposals for strengthening the UN or pushing federal world government, such as an amazing item, "World Government Means World Communism"; mailings of Rembert Gilman Smith's *Moscow Over Methodism*; 186 pages of malicious attack, insinuation and guilt by association, which has a fascinating jacket that pictures Joe Stalin brooding happily over a good Akron-style Methodist church whose vacant doorways have obviously been emptied of their

brood by the tornado of communism. Pastors and local church officials from one end of the country to another have been deluged by "Is There a Pink Fringe in The Methodist Church and What Shall We Do About It?", a pamphlet written and distributed by the Committee for the Preservation of Methodism, with the son of a former bishop for president. It has a fascinating list of "subversives", even if the authors cannot find, as in the case of Hal Luccock, Harold Case and others, what their connection with The Methodist Church might be!

The church school literature for which the Editorial Division of the Board of Education is responsible has also been the target for many attacks. It was particularly true of *The Adult Student*, which, under the direction of the late Charles Schofield, developed a "Learning for Life" series that approached many social and economic problems from a liberal point of view.

A complicating factor in the situation has been the not always smooth job of thirteen years of trying to live together as a church family. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church were members of the same family but grew up in different households. Then, after they came of age, they tried to get acquainted with each other and become of one blood with unification in 1939. The job has not always been easy. There has always been considerable suspicion, particularly from some Methodist Protestants and representatives of the former Southern branch, that certain persons from the old north church were unduly radical. The pronouncements of the Methodist Federation served to confirm their suspicions. Their uneasiness in the company of social liberals has broken out in a rash of accusations and attempts to clean house.

The National Conference of Methodist Youth is another heritage from the northern branch of Methodism that has stimulated many a speech and underlined more paragraphs. It has existed as the spokesman of two streams of youth work, namely, that

which comes through the fellowships and groups organized in local churches and that which comes from the college and university campuses organized through the Methodist Student Movement. The annual conferences and state student movement leadership of these two groups meet annually to formulate their own program, elect their own officers, take their own stands on issues they feel to be important. It is a youth-run, directed, dominated, inspired, and led organization. This very freedom, combined with immaturity, of course, has led to accusations of irresponsibility. When speaking on social issues, the National Conference of Methodist Youth has been generally anti-military and pro-social security. At its meeting at Purdue, preceding the last Convocation of Methodist Youth in late summer of 1951, the Conference re-elected as vice-president of its council, James Lawson, a former student at Baldwin-Wallace College who is serving a prison sentence as a result of his conscientious objector stand against conscription. That Lawson is a conscientious objector, a prison inmate and a Negro but adds excitement to the chase.

The unification of Methodism also brought considerably more lay responsibility and participation into all of the affairs of the Church. Lay leadership tends to fall into the hands of the more articulate professional and business classes. A breakdown of the membership of the last General Conference indicates how small is the representation from farm and laboring groups in the lawmaking body of The Methodist Church. They naturally reflect the conservative opinion of the middle-class constituency. It is decidedly more conservative than the ministerial leadership as a whole and more fearful of the alleged "socialistic" patterns of the "welfare state."

During the past quadrennium, a reputed \$250,000 have been spent by a special commission which is surveying the organization of The Methodist Church and is bringing a report to the 1952 General Conference, proposing a quite radical reorganization of the structure of Methodism. Included in the report is the recommendation that there be

an official "department of Christian social relations," which shall have "special concern for temperance, world peace, and other social and economic issues." It would be charged with making available to the church membership resource material concerning social and economic relations and respond from local groups with information and guidance. It would seek to encourage and implement the "Social Creed" of The Methodist Church, cooperate with other agencies in service projects in helping them to express Christian convictions in social areas, and work with other agencies in stimulating Christian social thinking and action within the Church. There is considerable support in Methodism for such an agency. Those who sponsor the Board of Temperance, however, take a rather dim view of this proposal, feeling that the specialized task of their agency would be jeopardized by getting the anti-alcohol cause mixed up with other activities more liable to be suspected as being directed from Moscow, and the Peace Commission is also uncertain, perhaps from a fear that its prophetic witness might be interfered with.

Among Methodist ministerial leadership, generally speaking, there is considerable confusion as to how to meet the social issues of the moment. The intransigent policy of the leadership of the Methodist Federation for Social Action in the past quadrennium has baffled many of the church's liberals, who were members of the Federation but impotent in determining policy. It has disillusioned others and done

only a disservice to the cause of economic and social liberalism in the denomination. Nothing has arisen to take the Federation's place as the spearhead of a responsible social action group within the Church. Most of the annual conferences in Methodism have social commissions of one kind or another that speak for their particular constituency. Some boards and agencies in their meetings take occasional action on different social issues, particularly as they may impinge upon the responsibility of that particular group, but there is no agency that now focuses Methodist social concern. This, combined with the disturbing theological attacks on the old "liberal" position has served to dishearten many of the older leaders, and the young men have been considerably less than eager to fill in the vacancies, especially when they consider the "cost" of being identified with the social action wing.

There is no telling in advance what General Conference will do, except that there will be some merry sessions in San Francisco about the first of May.

There is also a more theologically responsible movement among younger Methodists that may come into leadership in another decade or so. Only the 60's can document that hope. Methodism has too long a heritage of social service and action to let itself by-pass the contemporary need. What is required is a sense of cohesion, an operating unity, plus a "theology," a purpose, that will replace the shattered relics of its dying liberalism.

SOCIAL ACTION AND REACTION

By ALBERT J. PENNER

An outgrowth of the strong social gospel movement, especially among liberal Protestants, has been the setting up of official and non-official social action organizations in a number of denominations. The Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian churches was a pioneer in this movement. It was organized in 1934 by the General Council as an agency of the churches and has become, with the American Board for Foreign Missions and the Board of Home Missions, one of the three major boards.

Its spiritual father was Professor Arthur E. Holt, Professor of Christian Ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary. He had been strongly influenced by a long line of creative Congregational leaders in the field of social action, among whom were such stalwart champions as Horace Bushnell, Washington Gladden, Newman Smyth, Josiah Strong and Graham Taylor. Under the impetus of men like these the Congregational churches had from time to time set up special committees and commissions in such areas as labor, industrial relations, and international and race relations, until by 1927 there was a full fledged "Department of Social Relations."

The organization of the Council for Social Action was effected amid general enthusiasm, and, I have been told, by virtually unanimous vote. Dr. Fred Field Goodsell, then the Executive Vice President of the American Board, declared that if the Board would have to withdraw ten missionaries in order to provide funds for the Council for Social Action, it would be a sacrifice worth making.

Many of the strongest ministers, professors, and denominational leaders became active and enthusiastic promoters of the new movement which it was hoped would sweep through the churches and visibly hasten the coming of the Kingdom.

Courageous faith and contagious joy characterized its progressive spirit.

The General Council By-laws state, "this Council shall be the agency of the Congregational Christian churches for helping to make the Christian Gospel more effective in society, national and world-wide, through research, education and action. . . . In its research, the Council will aim to be impartial, its only bias being that of the Christian view of life; its educational efforts also envisage the cultivation of public opinion; in action the Council may on occasion intercede directly in specific situations."

The C. S. A. is composed of eighteen directors who are elected by the General Council for six year terms from among ministers, laymen, and lay women in equal proportion. These directors employ the staff and in general review and help plan the activities and participate in the production and issuance of policy statements. The staff at present consists of the Director and competent departmental heads in the fields of industrial relations, international relations, agricultural relations, race relations, and Christian citizenship. All these men are ordained ministers. Each staff member has the advice and assistance of a highly competent and skilled committee made up so far as possible of experts in their respective fields. The directors and staff meet together from two to three times a year. A large proportion of the staff's time is spent in field work which includes such activities as speaking in churches and at conferences, organizing seminars, round tables, laymen's retreats and the like. Hundreds of men and women and young people have participated in Washington and United Nations Seminars, and one group has even visited Europe.

The C. S. A. got off to a bad start so far as its relations with the churches were concerned by its supposed connection with a

so-called "resolution against the profit motive" in 1934. Actually this offending resolution was adopted by the General Council by a recorded vote of 130-17) two days before the C. S. A. was organized. The notorious resolution sounded radical to many laymen in 1934. It sounds communistic to them today. As a matter of fact, the first C. S. A. dissociated itself from this resolution when in a message to the churches it stated, "The Council is committed neither to Communism nor to socialism nor to the New Deal." But somehow, in the minds of many people, the Council was charged with promulgating an attack on the capitalist system and was dubbed socialist or even communist. (Certainly this resolution of 1934 does not express the views of the present directors and staff of the C. S. A.)

Throughout its history, therefore, the Council has been under some suspicion of radicalism. But at the present time this suspicion has ripened into opposition and the opposition into fairly wide-spread and determined attack.

Our American free enterprise system was considerably less sure of itself in 1934 than it is in 1952 (a point conveniently forgotten) or than it may be a few years hence. The present chairman of the Council, Dean Eliston Pope of Yale Divinity School, recently wrote (Christianity and Crisis 8/6/51), "The Christian tends toward the left of center, if he takes his faith seriously and has pondered carefully the examples of the prophets and Jesus." The C. S. A. tends toward "the left of center" in its general orientation. No wonder that there might be more than a lifting of eye-brows, for that certainly is not the political or economic or social orientation of the well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed Congregational wellers of Suburbiana. The suburbs are said to be the great present day opportunity for church expansion, but we must be prepared to expect a strong reassertion of the present conservative and even reactionary trend.

I cite the following illustration from a recent issue of *Social Action* Magazine.

RESURGENT RIGHT WING

A Congregational minister of a suburban church in New England recently began a series of six informal discussions for his laymen on Christianity and social issue. At the first session, 12 members of his congregation discussed with enthusiasm and mutual edification John T. Flynn's *The Road Ahead* and several published appraisals of the book from various religious and social viewpoints. At the next session only three laymen appeared and they informed the minister that this would be the last session they would attend. The minister, who has the respect of his parish as a conscientious and well informed Christian, discovered after persistent inquiry that the laymen were withdrawing because business and social associates had looked upon the series with suspicion and had advised that participation in such small groups discussing controversial issues might get them labelled in the community as radical or pro-communist.

Some of the actions of the C. S. A. have frankly not been of the kind to win friends and influence people among this strata of society. A 1951 issue of *Social Action* Magazine bore the title, "Protestant Piety and the Right Wing." It dealt in a careful but forthright way with such more or less well-known groups as "The Committee for Constitutional Government," "The National Economic Council," "The Foundation for Economic Education," "Spiritual Mobilization," and "The Christian Freedom Foundation." It revealed how they operate, what is their general point of view, and who pays for their propaganda. It showed that though they talk much about freedom, especially economic freedom, they do so without understanding the complexity of our society and the corporateness of our existence.

Organized opposition to the C. S. A. centers at present in two groups. One is a Congregational lay group in Minnesota

which was formed about two years ago with a modest budget and an executive. It claims to be in favor of the C. S. A., and not out to kill it. The group strongly advocates certain changes. The ire of this group was aroused to something approaching fever heat by the Council's testimony in Washington on behalf of Federal Aid to Education. It was this testimony that apparently crystallized the opposition.

A second major center of opposition is in southern California, more specifically in the First Congregational Church, especially in the person of its minister, James W. Fifield. That Dr. Fifield should have little sympathy for the general aims and purposes of the Council will be clear to all who are familiar with the point of view of the organization which he himself set up in the year 1934 called "Spiritual Mobilization." The "southern California group" has employed a certain Mr. John Payne to do a "very thorough research job" on the C. S. A. He has prepared a 34-page mimeographed document which contains an attack upon all phases of Council activities. This document has been circulated in a limited way among key laymen in a number of churches in various parts of the country with instructions that it be not shown to their ministers and particularly that it be not allowed to fall into the hands of anyone connected with the C. S. A.

Since the Council for Social Action is supported by the benevolence gifts of the churches (in 1951 it received about \$89,000 out of a total of about \$4,000,000) the opponents are urging that churches insist that none of their contributions be in any way allocated to the C. S. A. There are some who would like nothing better than to abolish the Council completely. Whatever strategy may be planned or attempted to weaken or to destroy the Council, a proposal is to come before the next meeting of the General Council in June requesting that a special committee on review, widely representative of the entire denomination, be appointed. This will no doubt be done. It is an action which the directors and staff of the C. S. A. will gladly welcome.

It may be of interest to note the kind of criticisms which are most frequently made. There is generally the charge that the Council is "socialistic or communistic." The profit motive resolution is usually brought in at this point. A study has also been made of the files of the House Un-American Activities Committee where some of the former and present members of the staff have the honor to be listed. Anyone familiar with these files knows that they are not only often inaccurate and untrue, but that they often completely misrepresent the persons listed. Only one of the present staff has a fairly impressive listing with this committee, as having been a member of no less than 10 subversive groups. He actually belonged to only three of these, and these were all organizations set up in aid of the Spanish loyalists. It appears that today anyone who is Anti-Franco is a Communist.

Another favorite charge against the Council is that it is not broadly representative and especially that it is not representative of the lay point of view. The Minnesota group said, "We do not insist that the C. S. A. express only majority opinion. But we feel sure that as long as it is supported by all Congregationalists, it must be so organized that various points of view are adequately and continuously represented in its deliberations." This is a fair comment and it may be a just criticism. But as a matter of fact, the present directors of the Council represent a very broad point of view. There is not always unanimity in the discussions. It is true that no minority reports have been issued as some have advocated. But by the time the Council is prepared to make a policy statement this statement has been so thoroughly discussed that both staff and directors have come to rather remarkable agreement. Everyone agrees fully that we ought to get the finest, the most representative and the ablest of our laymen to serve. Obviously the nominating committee of the General Council would not be at liberty to nominate as Directors avowed enemies of the Council. But within those generous limits the Nominating Com-

mittee is anxious to present the strongest, ablest, most representative possible slate.

Still another cause of opposition centers in the work of the Legislative Committee, and especially what is called its "lobbying." To quote the Minnesota group, "we urge the discontinuance of the lobby in Washington, D. C. We want a Council to speak *to* us but not *for* us." The Secretary of the Department of Christian Citizenship has his office in Washington. On a few rare occasions he or someone else has made carefully prepared statements at congressional hearings. Actually none of his time is given to lobbying in the usually accepted sense of the term. He has no interest group whom he represents. So very minute a portion of his time could under any interpretation be conceived as designed to influence legislation that it was a long and still unresolved argument among the directors as to whether he needed to register at all under the so-called "lobbying act." It is simply an overstatement to say that "we maintain a lobby in Washington."

So far as the Council trying to speak for the entire denomination is concerned (which is often charged), it is true that at a few hearings the speaker did not carefully enough designate those for whom he presumed to speak. On one or two occasions indeed testimony was made in support of General Council resolutions. Today, anyone who testifies for the C. S. A. is required to preface his testimony by reading a very carefully worded statement saying plainly that he is speaking for the C. S. A. and for no one else.

It is doubtless true that even so there are those who gain the impression that the C. S. A. speaks, or claims to speak, for the entire denomination. But this risk must be run, or else any organization set up for action also in the political field is denied one of its chief opportunities to wield proper Christian influence, or to take significant action.

There are a variety of other charges and criticisms. The Council has given "all out endorsement of the Welfare State"; it has

"defended the State Department against its critics." It has "favored socialized medicine, federal aid to education, peacetime price controls, extension of Social Security, extension of projects like T.V.A. and M.V.A. and raising of minimum wage standards."

The reactionary tendency of some of the critics is seen in that C. S. A. is actually criticized for supporting "The Marshall Plan, the Bretton Woods Agreement, Point 4, and the U.N."

To many of these charges, the C. S. A. is glad and proud to plead guilty. Others are frankly either exaggerated, distorted, or untrue.

One of the most interesting recent discoveries is that the C. S. A. is "un-Congregational." Prior to our ill-fated attempt to unite with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, it was assumed that Congregational was whatever Congregational churches do. But now suddenly, "Congregational" is discovered by some to be a severely limited concept, an atomistic concept, of the complete independence and absolute autonomy of the local church. One of those who has made this discovery is Russell J. Clinchy, who was one of the founders of the C. S. A. and who is now a writer for the Foundation for Economic Education. In a long letter to the Editor of "Advance," he says that "The central meaning of Congregationalism is found in the principle that any member of Congregationalists can form a voluntary fellowship to promote belief among themselves and others in any religious or social service concept they may hold in unison, but there should be no agency of the Congregational churches which should attempt to formulate any statement or program of theological or social belief." His suggestion is that the "General Council rescind the action of 1934 which established the Council for Social Action. Then the directors of the C. S. A. could organize a new Council with freedom to enroll as many members as it can enlist, seeking support from those who wish such a Council to exist and to represent them."

But if this is Congregationalism, then Congregational forebears have long forgotten what Congregationalism is. Then they could not have organized a General Council, or an American Missionary Association, or an Annuity Fund, or any organization to make the total fellowship effective. It seems to me unbelievable that Congregational churches cannot unite and together officially set up any organization they want to. They could make "Spiritual Mobilization" an agency of the churches if they wanted to. The churches do not need to support the C. S. A. Plenty of them have not supported the American Board. To insist that it was "un-Congregational" to set up the C. S. A. seems to me to be utterly absurd.

It is expected that when the General Council meets next June in Claremont, California, the C. S. A. will come under some attack. At the very least a committee will be authorized and charged with the task of carefully, thoroughly, and impartially reviewing the staff, program, and policies of the C. S. A. It is possible that certain changes will be advocated. It is

conceivable that certain changes would be wise.

It is, of course, possible that an attempt will be made to abolish the C. S. A., though this is unlikely.

I do not think the General Council will attempt to "set the clock back" by abolishing the Council for Social Action or by retreating from the general social ideals to which the great majority have been committed for many years. We are passing through a temporary period of reaction, and we must resolve to ride out the storm. Nor must we ride passively at anchor. I think we must steer boldly into the storm and be ready to engage in action to match our gospel. Social action invites reaction, and especially at a time like the present. We should not be surprised that this is so. We should not be too deeply disturbed that this is so. Our churches are too deeply committed to the social implications of our Gospel to retreat from it. Reaction must not be permitted to destroy the churches' commitment to courageous social action.

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AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

By CLARENCE KILDE

These are days when it is well for us again to give regard to the relevance of the Church in American diplomacy and the problem of war and peace. The proper place and function of the Church in this respect has swung like the proverbial pendulum these two score years. This is another illustration of the ambiguity of Christianity in culture, namely, how far is a particular expression of Christian Faith a product of a culture, and how far does it affirmatively mold public opinion in that culture. Or put it this way, in how far is the Church a willing servant or instrument of governmental policy and how far is the Church the conscience of the State.

This problem is as old as the Judean hills. At the outset, therefore, it will be helpful for us to throw around ourselves and our problem the wide horizon of historical perspective. So we go back into the Old Testament to a specific historical situation when prophetic religion spoke out to the State in unequivocal terms.

The story is recorded in the 22nd chapter in the first Book of Kings. The time is 850 B.C. and King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah contemplate a united attack against Syria in the desire to capture the city Ramoth-Gilead. Moved by superstition and perhaps partly by a guilty conscience the kings desired an expression from the religious forces. Of course, they would also build up public opinion for their cause by enlisting an affirmative reply from the priests. So King Ahab asked four hundred hand-picked priests, should we go to war and what will be our success?

The King received what he wanted, a unanimous approval of the priests to justify what he intended to do; and one of the priests, Zedekiah, echoed the popular refrain with emphatic emotional fervor. Many times since in history, the State has asked

the Church to sanctify the military adventure of the State. Indeed, this perennial temptation of the priest to be Zedekiah is so integral to life as to be present in our American status of separation of Church and State as well as in a Church-State relationship.

But King Jehoshaphat, although girded for war, did not like this unanimity among the clergy. Hesitatingly he raised another question: "Is there not a prophet of the Lord beside that we might inquire of him?" Yes, is there not a more authentic prophet? Can one trust professional priests or ministers who are tempted to say what the people want to hear? "And the King of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him." In Ahab human nature thus ran so true to form. We do not like people who say things we do not like to hear. Ahab confided that this man never prophesied good but evil. And Ahab had set his heart on something that involved both his ambition and prestige. Any criticism would be an irritation. Ancient kings and modern dictators tolerate no objective appraisal of their proposed ventures. Yet Jehoshaphat, with more of a conscience than Ahab, insisted on hearing yet one more. So a messenger was set to fetch Micaiah, the prophet.

Meanwhile, the kings put on royal robes and so set the stage as to impress Micaiah and so overawe him into an affirmative answer. Many a modern minister has been overawed and impressed by an invitation to appear before some imposing captain of industry or a politician behind an impressive mahogany desk. Caught off guard, such a minister generally forgets God and becomes a "yes man." That is why old Dr. Lorimer, the minister father of the famous editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, said to his

young assistant minister, "Never fear the face of mortal clay." That may have been the personal motto of Micaiah for he refused to be impressed, he would not be scared into becoming a rubber stamp to be utilized by political power. Even the messenger tried his best to prepare Micaiah's answer by suggesting to him, in so far as the other four hundred priests ahead of him had already given their consent, therefore, he might as well make it unanimous. This diplomatic pressure to win the support of a God-conscious man by suggesting it will look well in the secretary's minutes if he can report a unanimous vote has often tempted compromise with conscience. But Micaiah had an unconsenting conscience before an unpalatable wrong. To the mealy-mouthed messenger Micaiah said, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak."

Here is the mark of a true prophet, his independence from the pressure of majority opinion, and, therefore, his refusal to echo the pious phrases of that pleasant religion that sanctifies the purposes of a people at any given time. The true definition of the prophet is not one who foretells, but one who forth tells the truth. He speaks forth bravely, and he speaks for God. He does not sanctify but he criticizes the aspirations of the social community. With religious insight he often as well foretells the result of the proposed action. So Micaiah said to the king, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, 'These have no master: Let them return every man to his house in peace!'" Centuries later a son of the prophetic tradition was to say, "They who take the sword shall perish with the sword." That seems to be a law in the foundation of the universe. The way of *aggressive* war is death. The message of prophetic religion never changes much from one century to the next in that its message to a war-desirous people is the message of doom. As surely as God created a world of physical laws, so also His world moves by spiritual laws. To sow violence and start a war is to reap destruction.

But Ahab's prestige was at stake. He had committed himself before his people. There was martial music in the air, and the cheers of a deluded people. He must go forward or lose face. So he was angry when anyone dared stand in his way. Emotionally he was not mature because he could not look at the situation objectively without emotionally including himself. So he swept aside Micaiah, ordered the bugle call, went to war, was killed in battle, and his people were thrown into confusion.

This is the perennial teaching of history. Nationalism would always use religion for its own ends; nationalism inflates the ego of the ministers by asking their blessing. Yet God is not mocked, this being a law-abiding universe, whatsoever we sow we shall reap. If we sow war and violence, we shall reap war and destruction.

Now, against this background of Biblical history consider our own recent history.

During World War I the ministers of the church lined up four hundred strong to give an unqualified support, an unexamined approval of the war effort. The sermons of the Zedekiahs in the American pulpits of 1917-18 make dismal and depressing reading today. Undoubtedly, the extreme length to which the preachers' language went in an emotionally emphatic support of that war had two understandable results. Because these modern ministers, as the priests in King Ahab's day, mixed the prejudices of the people and the military program of the State and called this the counsel of God, therefore, many of the war generation abandoned the Church. Religious pronouncements, which in retrospect seem shallow, contribute to loss of respect.

And the second result is seen in the preaching in American Protestantism following the First World War. The Zedekiahs were still with us for during the 1920's and 1930's the ministry of the Church swung with the pendulum of popular opinion against war to the opposite extreme from that of 1918, now declaring the equally absurd exaggeration, "No good ever came from war." Pulpiters in Protestantism had

a field day every Armistice Sunday denouncing war and talking about a fanciful idea, the way to stop war was to personally and resolutely have no part in the support of the armed services called "the war machine." The pathos of American Protestantism in the 20's and 30's lay in the fact its profession of pacifism was doubly irreligious, in that it was compounded with pride. Popular preachers actually took pride in the fact their sermons drove away soldiers of the standing army and ex-soldiers of 1918. Behind the barricade of the pulpit these ministers knocked down the military with intellectual clubs.

As a matter of fact, right up to the eve of Pearl Harbor the American pulpit shared in proclaiming a national attitude which could be described by the three little monkeys, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." For the American Church to revel in moralizing talk about substituting love in place of force in international politics was to betray a loss of real contact with both the nature of this world and the classic Christian faith which describes this world. It is a perversion of the Faith to think one gets rid of evil by denying its existence; or to think that in a world of evil there can be anything like neutrality. And so we came up to World War II with neither foreign policy nor firearms. The first long years of costly reversals in the war came as a consequence.

In the decade since that time, because of two world wars in a generation, and because of reorientation in classic Christian theology, the truth of which has reasserted itself in the bitter experiences of war, the ministers of the Christian Faith can now with more equanimity support the necessity of military force in a world where evil cannot be denied. Given the sinful nature of this world, the children of light must perforce match wits and power with the children of darkness. Though we may intend to be as harmless as doves, we must be as wise as serpents.

But the testing time which will call for the prophet Micaiah is fast coming. Our

friends and allies in Europe already have deep fears of what America may do when our rearmament is complete. Will there be steadiness on our part when the full power of a war machine lies at our hands? Already there are those who are in favor of a so-called "preventive" war, and are calling for an ultimatum to Russia, "Cross one more boundary and we drop atom bombs on Moscow." This same kind of mind would make the Yalu River our objective even if we had to take on the full force of China and Russia in consequence. There is reason to believe, as our industrial power and military might increases so will this temptation grow that we play God and try to make every nation in our image and so run the world.

This is the poignant question we had better face now. Will America, as Ahab of old, becoming drunk with power in the preparation for war, experience a "failure of nerve" and launch a war despite the counsel of our Christian Faith that they who *aggressively* take the sword shall perish by the sword; that they who sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind?

With power comes pride. With pride comes desire to "save face." Supposing we prepare mightily for war and no war comes? Will we, like Ahab, feeling embarrassed at having called up the troops and made great preparations, then deliberately heighten the crisis between East and West in a hurry to let loose what we have assembled at such great cost?

To be sure, it is quite understandable how, after endless cease-fire negotiations in Korea and apparently futile negotiations with Russia in the United Nations, we, finally feeling our increased military strength will be tempted to seek a quick ending to the irritable suspense by launching an all-out war. But we would indeed be beguiled by wishful thinking if we deemed this a simple solution to the strain of sustained suspense. And what is worse, we would thus fly in the face of our historic heritage which has ever deplored aggressive war persuaded by the classic Christian in-

sight, that this being a moral universe, whatever nation launches such a war, that nation is doomed, whether it be the ancient kingdom of Ahab, or present day nations, whether America or Russia. Indeed, another insight of that same Faith has special warning for our Atomic Age, namely, the innocent suffer as well as the guilty. If this be so, then whether in the halls of Congress, in military circles, or on political platforms, or on street corners throughout the land, our present peril is this increased tendency to beat the breast and say, "Let's throw everything in the book at them and have it over with."

When we are thus tempted to feel as Ahab, precisely then we had better have a

regard for the prophetic religion of Micaiah. For with power comes pride, and pride cometh before a fall. This is the warning counsel of our Christian Faith to American diplomacy.

Yes, even before American diplomacy becomes fully clothed with unprecedented military might, American diplomacy had better observe the counsel of our historic Judaic-Christian Biblical Faith, giving heed to the Old Testament where it says "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18); and giving heed to the New Testament where it says "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

William Miller, "A Theologically Biased View of Protestant Politics," *Religion in Life*, Winter 1951-1952. This is a penetrating analysis of American Protestantism's non-political approach to politics.

Herman F. Reissig, "Time to Speak Up!", *The Christian Century*, December 26, 1951. This is an able article advancing the thesis:

"Next to helping spread communist reactionism, the most deplorable business anyone can engage in today is to help spread the indiscriminating brand of anti-communism which amounts to, and in some cases is probably with deliberation, an attack on all sober and intelligent analysis of what is going on in our world."

BOOK REVIEWS

THE NEW LAISSEZ FAIRE

The Readers Digest and *Christian Economics* continue to decry any variety of government interference with a "free economy." No longer, however, does the material come from warmed over excerpts from Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*. They have a new and more pretentious ally in the thought of Ludwig von Mises, whose huge (889 pages) volume *Human Action* was published in 1949 by Yale University Press. His thesis is twofold: that economic calculation is impossible under a totalitarian economy and that any degree of government interference inevitably leads to totalitarianism. His alternative is a scientifically based laissez faire economy, derived from a "scientific" analysis of human action.

This analysis of human action is, he contends, "free from valuations and preconceived ideas and judgments, it is universally valid and absolutely and plainly human" (p. 21). Economics is therefore free from all value "prejudices" and simply shows how a man must act if he wants to attain definite ends" (p. 10). This makes the choice between various economic practices a purely scientific one. This reads well until its implications are spelled out, for in fact von Mises only pretends to abstain from value judgments.

His pretense is a ruse whereby he is able to take one off guard and then insinuate his own value judgments. For example, economic liberalism (of the Adam Smith variety) is entirely neutral with regard to religion. But, and this is the rub, it is neutral only toward those religious beliefs which do not pretend to interfere with the conduct of social, political, and economic affairs" (p. 155). In other words, religion is acceptable so long as it has no social implications! Even this, however, is not maintained consistently. Religious individualism is enjoined upon his opponents, but not upon his allies. The economic liberals

"welcome the support which religious teachings may give to those moral precepts of which they themselves approve" (p. 157). What has happened to his scientific objectivity?

It has gone out of the window. This is even more apparent when he is able to lump together the Amsterdam report, Catholicism, Marxism, New Deal, Brunner, Temple, Italian Fascism and German Nazism because the "antagonisms between these parties and factions refer to *accidental* issues" but "they all agree in the *fundamental* thesis that the very existence of the capitalist system harms the vital interests of the immense majority of workers" and "ask in the name of social justice for the abolition of capitalism" (p. 671, italics mine). His distinction between accidental and fundamental is neither objective nor scientific; his use of "abolition" is plainly dishonest.

Yet his protest is so unnecessary! He makes it so by contending that since capitalism has "improved the people's standard of living in an unprecedented way," the "market economy needs no apologists and propagandists" (p. 850). But he is a propagandist! If he uses his scientific "objectivity" as a passport to the subordination of ethical values; he also uses his economics as a key to history. "The Roman Empire crumbled to dust because it lacked the spirit of liberalism and free enterprise" (p. 763); and "German aggressiveness" is traced to a discarding of "the liberal principles of free trade and peace" (p. 187). Evidently Marxism is not the only prey to the specialist fallacy of an economic determinism, for

It is not justice that determines the decision in favor of a definite social system. It is, on the contrary, the social system which determines what should be deemed right and what wrong (p. 717).

Hence, any definition of freedom which is not primarily economic freedom in a market

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economy is "a confusion of tongues" (p. 284f.).

The scientist turns apologist: "The choice is between capitalism and chaos" (p. 676). "It is *freedom versus government omnipotence*" (p. 726). Laissez faire is defined: "Let the common man choose and act; do not force him to yield to a dictator" (p. 727). The government must be restricted to the function of preserving economic freedom (p. 283)—then wars and monopolies would cease in an "unhampered market economy" (pp. 363, 681). Anything which inhibits selfishness is evil:

In urging people to listen to the voice of their conscience and to substitute considerations of public welfare for those of private profit, one does not create a working and satisfactory social order (p. 721).

Selfishness becomes the touchstone of virtue!

In all this—and I have hardly touched the surface—von Mises makes his appeal on the basis of security and escapism, haloed about with science. He claims scientific validity for his alternative to everything but a laissez faire which never has and never could exist (this is escapism!), which offers the security of "rightly understood selfishness." This is done on the basis of his uncritical assumptions of a split between economics and ethics, a harmony of interests, and the "objectivity" which makes his position so vulnerable.

What he is really offering is an alternative to Christianity. This can be seen by taking his ideas as religious myths. Any government interference is the sin whereby man is cast from the garden of harmony of interests. Harmony remains only so long as man is intelligently selfish. Thus salvation is the recovery of harmony by good works (individualism and acquisitiveness) and faith in the market economy, which is the means of grace. Idolatry is the attempt to put other goals (moral, religious, political) before the gods whose attributes are acquisitiveness, individualism and the market economy.

This is the threat of the "scientific" condemnation of ideas of social justice which derive from Christianity. We do not fear von Mises. His book is too big to be widely read; but we must challenge the assumptions of those who parrot him (often in the name of Christianity) to an age which is either too frantic for faith in anything but panaceas, or too acquisitive for faith in a God who demands more than philanthropy. We may be the last to belittle the balance of power controlling man's inordinate acquisitive impulses which now marks *actual* capitalism; but we must be alarmed at a mentality which can find refuge and reinforcement in such a volume as von Mises' *Human Action*.

JOHN E. BURKHART

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW. By Hans Lilje (Translated and with introduction by Olive Wyon). Muhlenberg Press. Philadelphia, 1950. 128 pp. \$1.25.

Dr. Hans Lilje, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hannover, in this book writes a simple yet extremely sensitive account of his arrest and imprisonment during the last year of the Nazi regime. Although the book is mainly factually narrative there are certain qualities of the Dostoevski novel in his account.

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ever, in August of 1944 was of a cinema-like quality. On the eve of his forty-fourth birthday the Gestapo agents arrived at his home and took him away. In prison he was given solitary confinement until the slow torture of investigation could begin. Then he was accused of conspiring to overthrow the Führer in the famous attempt on Hitler's life. From the dossier his accusers had all sorts of evidence of his connections with people in the ecumenical movement of the Church. This was sufficient ground for accusation: anyone who had friends abroad was surely in conspiracy to overthrow the Reich! He could not, nor would he, make any attempt to hide his relationship with his many non-German Christian friends of his days as General Secretary of the German Christian Students' World Union.

There is no parading of martyrdom in this book, nor is there any attempt to establish a pious sainthood. He did not relish arrest, but since he had to endure the time in prison he determined to arrive at a higher state of Christian Faith as a result of his imprisonment. And while he was interned he came out with many observations not unlike those described by John Hershey in his justly famous best seller, "The Wall," and by Arthur Koestler in his now classic novel, "Darkness at Noon." He speaks of his own yearnings, fears, courage, distrust, despondency, and he tells of how he was able to observe the various qualities of character and personality in his fellow prisoners as well as the attendants and guards of the prison. Surely he makes no attempt to duplicate the writings of Hershey and

Koestler, if indeed he is even familiar with them: yet there is a quality of similarity in the more simple, more narrative prose of this Christian leader.

Of some real interest is his description of his discipline in thinking, his plan to attain serenity at all costs in this difficult and dangerous situation of being captive to the Gestapo. Seven years have now gone by since the events he describes, but one has the impression that there will always be a deep contemporaneity to his experience. Here lies some of its spiritual value. From the experience of actually suffering for his faith he learned the deepest meaning of the Christian Belief.

Although the spirit of the book is characteristically and universally profoundly Christian the reader would have no difficulty knowing that this book was written by a German belonging to a state supported church even if all names and places had been left out. There is a certain element of aristocracy unfortunately present when he seems to show greater pity for the prisoners who have the "von" in front of their names. Furthermore he expresses some distress that he cannot as a staunch Lutheran accept the Jesuit or Calvinistic ability to conspire in the assassination of a tyrant. He could not have so conspired, he admits, although he recognizes no Christian wrong in the fact of killing in a time of war.

All in all this is a strong tale. There is much of the very ruggedness of Luther in the man who writes it, a Christian soldier.

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